

ENGINE STARTING TROUBLES

An engine that refuses to start or is difficult to start is very frustrating. More often than not, the problem is very minor and can be found with a simple and logical troubleshooting approach.

The following items show a beginning point from which to isolate engine starting problems.

Engine Fails to Start

Perform the following spark test to determine if the ignition system is operating properly.

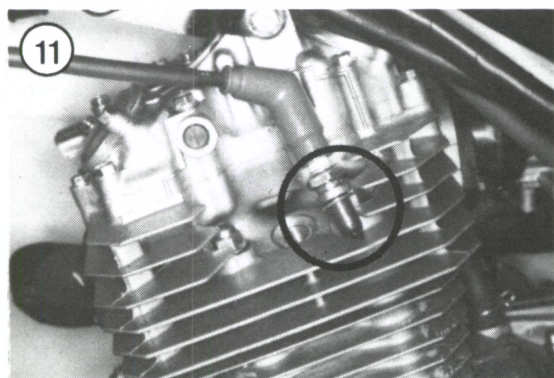
CAUTION

Before removing the spark plug in Step 1, clean all dirt and debris from the plug base. Dirt that falls into the cylinder will cause rapid piston, piston ring and cylinder wear.

1. Remove the spark plug (**Figure 10**) from the cylinder head.
2. Connect the spark plug wire and connector to the spark plug and touch the spark plug base to the cylinder head to ground it. Position the spark plug so you can see the electrode (**Figure 11**).
3. Turn the ignition key to ON and the engine stop switch (**Figure 9**) to RUN.

WARNING

Do not hold the spark plug, wire or connector or a serious electrical shock may result. If it is necessary to hold the high voltage lead, do so with an insulated pair of pliers. The high voltage generated by the ignition system could produce serious or fatal shocks.



4. Crank the engine over with the starter. A fat blue spark should be evident across the spark plug electrode.

5. If the spark is good, check for one or more of the following possible malfunctions:

- a. Obstructed fuel line(s) or fuel filter.
- b. Leaking head or cylinder base gasket(s).
- c. Low compression.
- d. Engine flooded with fuel.
- e. Choke not operating correctly.
- f. Throttle not operating correctly.

6. If spark is not good, check for one or more of the following:

- a. Weak ignition coil.
- b. Weak pulse generator unit.
- c. Weak DC-CDI unit.
- d. Broken or shorted high tension lead to the spark plug.
- e. Loose electrical connections.
- f. Dirty electrical connections.
- g. Loose or broken ignition coil ground wire.

Engine is Difficult to Start

Check for one or more of the following possible malfunctions:

- a. Fouled spark plug.
- b. Improperly operating choke.
- c. Blocked vent in fuel filler cap.
- d. Contaminated fuel system.
- e. Improperly adjusted carburetor.
- f. Loose electrical connections.
- g. Dirty electrical connections.
- h. Weak ignition coil.
- i. Weak pulse generator unit.
- j. Weak DC-CDI unit.
- k. Poor compression.

Engine Will Not Crank

If the engine will not crank because of a mechanical problem, check for one or more of the following possible malfunctions.

- a. Discharged battery.
- b. Defective starter and/or starter gear.
- c. Broken kickstarter.
- d. Seized piston.
- e. Seized crankshaft bearings.
- f. Broken connecting rod.
- g. Locked-up transmission or clutch assembly.

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